

April 2001

**ALBENI FALLS  
WILDLIFE MITIGATION  
PROJECT**

Annual Report



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# **Albeni Falls Wildlife Mitigation Project**

## **Annual Report of Wildlife Mitigation Activities**

Albeni Falls Interagency Work Group

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April 11, 2001

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## **Executive Summary**

The Albeni Falls Interagency Work Group was actively involved in implementing wildlife mitigation activities in 2000. The Work Group met each quarter to discuss management and budget issues affecting Albeni Falls wildlife mitigation. Members of the Work Group protected a total of 1,242 acres of wetland habitat in 2000. The total amount of wildlife habitat protected for Albeni Falls mitigation is approximately 4,190 acres (4,630 Habitat Units).

Approximately 16% of the total wildlife habitat lost has been mitigated. Land management activities were limited in 2000 as protection opportunities took up most staff time. Administrative activities increased in 2000 as funding was more evenly distributed among Work Group members. As a result, implementation is expected to continue to increase in the coming year. Land management and monitoring and evaluation activities will increase in 2001 as site-specific management plans are completed and implemented.

## **Background**

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) formed the Albeni Falls Interagency Work Group (Work Group) in 1985 for the purpose of determining wildlife impacts associated with the construction of the Albeni Falls hydroelectric project. The Work Group has remained active and evolved with the changes that have occurred in the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Program (Program). The Work Group formally adopted a set of Operating Guidelines in 1998 to establish a local decision-making process and to address mitigation implementation issues. Work Group members include the IDFG, the Kalispel Tribe, the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho (KTOI), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Other non-profit organizations such as the Inland Northwest Land Trust, Ducks Unlimited (DU), and The Nature Conservancy have attended meetings and share information, but they are not voting members.

Wildlife mitigation implementation activities associated with Albeni Falls Dam began in earnest in 1995-1996. However, Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) funding was primarily directed toward the IDFG and the Kalispel Tribe. The Work Group anticipates that the full scope of BPA funding will reach the broader Work Group membership in fiscal year 2001. The acreage acquired for Albeni Falls wildlife mitigation by all members of the Work Group totals 4,190 with a total of an estimated 4,759 Habitat Units (HUs) (Table 1). The baseline Habitat Evaluation Procedure (HEP) has been conducted on seven of thirteen parcels.

## **Land Acquisition**

### Idaho Department of Fish and Game

The IDFG did not acquire any new habitat areas in 2000 (Table 1). Effort was primarily directed at completing HEP analysis and developing management plans for properties acquired in 1999. The IDFG will renew its acquisition effort in 2001-2002.

### Kalispel Tribe

The Tribe completed 791 acres of acquisition and is in the process of closing on an additional 440 acres. Several appraisals have been conducted with the five being sent forward to BPA and four being purchased. The 437-acre Sivert property and the 303-acre Doramus property, both located near the reservation in Usk, Washington, were completed by early summer. An additional property (Schiebel) adjacent to these two will be purchased by March of 2001. The Nacarotto property (63-acres) near Priest River, ID was purchased in the later part of spring 2000. The total funds expended will be \$1,426,275. Additional properties are available and will be cued into upcoming implementation years through the workgroup.

### Coeur d'Alene Tribe

The Coeur d'Alene Tribe is currently pursuing acquisition of two of the three parcels the Tribe previously proposed for acquisition in through the Albeni Falls Work Group. The smallest of the three parcels originally proposed is no

longer available due to a change in ownership of the property. The Johnson Property, which encompasses 411-acres in the central portion of the Benewah Creek Watershed is the highest priority acquisition and was the focus of most pre-acquisition efforts during the reporting period. This parcel encompasses 25% of the National Wetland Inventory Wetlands in the Watershed and contains roughly 2.3 miles of the Benewah Creek mainstem, as well as the lower segments of two smaller streams that flow into Benewah Creek from the west side of the watershed. The estate special administrator plans to sell the property in a competitive bid process and our efforts during 2000 focused on completing pre-acquisition activities before the bidding process begins. The property appraisal and Level 1 Environmental Survey were completed during the fall of 2000. The cultural resource survey was contracted during the fall of 2000, however snow cover has prevented completion of the field surveys to date. As soon as the snow melts the cultural resources surveys will be completed along with the NEPA checklist. We expect to complete the acquisition of the property during the summer of 2001.

The second property currently being pursued for acquisition is the 647-acre Bader Property that is located in the St. Joe Watershed and encompasses 408 acres of the St. Joe River Floodplain. The flood plain portion of the property was formerly a mix of deciduous forest, scrub shrub and marsh habitats. Pre-acquisition activities accomplished during the reporting period were ongoing negotiations with the landowner, who was represented by a Realtor from St. Maries, and the completion of the property appraisal in November of 2000. The remainder of the pre-acquisition activities have awaited appropriate weather conditions and the completion of activities associated with the higher priority Johnson property. Currently negotiations center on developing an option to buy agreement so pre-acquisition activities may move forward.

#### Kootenai Tribe of Idaho

The Tribe is currently analyzing several new acquisitions and continuing with one of three approved parcels the Tribe proposed for acquisition in the 2000 Albeni Falls Work Group proposal process. The largest of the three parcels, Ball Creek, originally proposed is still available, but owner negotiations have slowed and discussions with allotment owners and other divided interests has lengthened the process further than expected. Another property of similar size and habitat qualities may be proposed in it's place and assessments of ranking criteria, habitat, and other issues are currently being investigated prior to formal presentation to the Albeni Falls Work Group. The next largest property, Perkins Lake (89 ac) has intact wet meadows and is located in a high priority creek basin identified by several conservation organizations. The property appraisal was completed in the fall of 2000. NEPA and an updated version of a past Level 1 Environmental Survey will be signed in spring of 2001. The cultural resource survey was contracted by IDFG during a previous acquisition proposal. The Tribe expects completion of acquisition activities and MOA with BPA during the summer of 2001.

The Shorty's Island property, re-proposed in the 2000 proposal process, was appraised in fall of 2000. Prior to an Environmental Level I Site Assessment, an offer was submitted, but was rejected by the owner. Negotiations have stalled, but the Tribe is pursuing other options with the owner. This property is not anticipated to close in 2001. Other properties in the area and with similar riparian habitats are under ranking criteria analysis and may be proposed for acquisition to the Albeni Falls Working Group.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

No report.

**Land Management**

Idaho Department of Fish and Game

Boundary Creek WMA

Over 850 acres were prepared and planted to a mixture of perennial grasses and forbs in fall 1999. The USFWS disced and cultivated the area to prepare the site for planting. NRCS then contracted with a local framer to drill 16,000 pounds of seed. IDFG spent 25 man-days controlling weeds in the new seeding during spring and summer 2000. Gates and fences were installed to prohibit motorized access. IDFG filed with the Department of Water Resources for a water right transfer from irrigation to wildlife storage. A multi-agency technical team continued to develop plans to re-establish cottonwoods and native shrubs in floodplain sites. IDFG completed a first draft of the management plan for the area that was distributed to agencies and individuals for review. Ducks Unlimited completed an engineering design for water distribution and control on the area. DU selected a contractor, and a water diversion structure was placed in Boundary creek in September 2000.

Pend Oreille WMA

The IDFG initiated management activities on the Pend Oreille WMA properties that have completed and approved management plans. Trash-filled silage pits at the Henderson ranch were covered with 1200 cubic yards of fill, graded, and seeded to native grasses. A portion of the Henderson Ranch property was prescribed burned to maintain goose pasture. Boundary fencing and a parking area were constructed at the Ginter property. A professional weed control contractor was hired and 160 hours of effort was expended on weed control on the Pend Oreille WMA properties. Management plans are under development for the Cocolalla Lake, Westmond Lake, Albeni Cove, McMahon, and Hunter Ranch properties and should be ready by mid 2001.

Kalispel Tribe

Currently the Kalispel Tribe is completing HEP reports and Management plans for the Sivert and Doramus properties. In 2001 we will be completing the HEP and Management Plans for the Schiebel and Nacarotto properties. \$13,000 will be used to contract Eastern Washington University to start investigations on



the development of rapid assessment techniques to monitor and evaluate project habitat enhancement in relationship to population response. We anticipate the contract to be in place early 2001 for the 2001 field season. The Tribe is also continuing to search for properties that will continue to meet habitat obligations for Albeni Falls Dam.

#### Coeur d'Alene Tribe

A rough draft of Wildlife Habitat Management Plan for the Coeur d'Alene Indian Reservation was completed during the reporting period. The information contained in this rough draft forms the basis for selecting areas in which to search for mitigation opportunities.

Land management activities associated with the targeted properties have largely awaited the completion of the property rights acquisitions. Extensive resource inventories and surveys will be required before a complete management plan can be written. However, initial data on the extent of current wetland/riparian habitat within the parcels and resources for writing management prescriptions were gathered during the year.

#### Kootenai Tribe of Idaho

With the recent inclusion of the KTOI, no acquisitions or related management activities were reported for 2000.

#### U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

No report.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

#### Idaho Department of Fish and Game

##### Boundary Creek WMA

IDFG initiated baseline wildlife surveys with duck breeding pair and brood counts where other wildlife species were also documented. From these censuses, 21 breeding pairs produced 11 duck broods from four species. Only one Canada goose brood was observed. The bald eagle nest produced two eaglets to flight stage. Many other species were documented. Kokanee redds were monitored before and during installation of the water diversion structure in Boundary Creek. Weed patches were mapped to facilitate implementation of efficient control measures.

##### Pend Oreille WMA

IDFG biologists monitored water levels at Henderson Ranch, water use of the Trout Creek water right at Hunter Ranch, noxious weeds, and waterfowl production on the Pend Oreille WMA. Spotted knapweed, common tansey, orange hawkweed, and Canada thistle are the primary noxious weed species infesting the Pend Oreille WMA properties. In 2000, 185.5 acres were treated with herbicides to control weeds. Waterfowl surveys at Henderson Ranch, Hunter ranch, Westmond lake, and Albeni cove revealed that 69 breeding

pairs of ducks that produced 18 broods and 50 ducklings. Thirty-six pairs of Canada geese produced 10 broods and 46 goslings. Water level and water use data are on file at the IDFG regional office in Coeur d'Alene Idaho.

#### Kalispel Tribe

No monitoring activities have taken place as the properties were purchased in 2000 and 2001.

#### Coeur d'Alene Tribe

No Monitoring and Evaluation activities were conducted by the Coeur d'Alene Tribe during the reporting period as acquisition of the targeted properties is yet to be accomplished.

#### Kootenai Tribe of Idaho

With the recent inclusion of the KTOI, no acquisitions or related monitoring and evaluation activities were reported for 2000.

#### U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

The Corps assisted IDFG in locating and staking HEP locations at the Albeni Cove, Hunter Ranch, MacMahon and Fletcher parcels using GPS. HEP points were located and staked with green/white steel fence posts for future permanent identification.

## **Planning and Administration**

#### Idaho Department of Fish and Game

The IDFG served as the lead agency on the Work Group until December and, as such, completed a variety of development and coordination activities associated with the Albeni Falls Wildlife Mitigation Project. Due to the resignation of the IDFG mitigation biologist, and the prolonged vacancy of that position, the Kalispel Tribe and the IDFG shared some planning and administration responsibilities at the end of 2000. The workgroup decided to transfer the lead entity responsibilities to the Kalispel Tribe at the end of 2000. It was decided that the Kalispel Tribe would assume those duties for 2001 and that leadership would return to IDFG in 2002 after the new IDFG mitigation biologist had been hired. The IDFG coordinated the development of the fiscal year 2001 project proposal, coordinated quarterly Work Group meetings, developed and distributed meeting agendas and summaries, and coordinated the development of the fiscal year 2001 preliminary Work Group budget. The IDFG established reimbursable agreements with each of the three tribes to perform Albeni Falls wildlife mitigation implementation tasks. The IDFG also set up a new contract for interim O&M activities on the Boundary Creek WMA and modified the existing Pend Oreille WMA O&M contract to include interim O&M activities on the new acquisitions. Together with the Kalispel Tribe the IDFG developed a preliminary fiscal year 2002 budget to address its on-going O&M funding needs and will work with the Work Group over the next several months to finalize that budget. The IDFG

regularly attends CBFWA meetings and is participated in the subbasin planning and rolling review processes.

#### Kalispel Tribe

The Kalispel Tribe has participated in all workgroup activities including HEP assessments and Management plan development and review. Due to the resignation of the IDFG mitigation biologist, the workgroup decided to transfer the lead entity responsibilities to the Kalispel Tribe at the end of 2000. It was decided that the Kalispel Tribe would assume those duties for 2001 and that leadership would return to IDFG in 2002 after the new IDFG mitigation biologist had been hired.

#### Coeur d'Alene Tribe

Planning and Administration activities include attending Albeni Falls Work Group functions, and continuing professional training. Albeni Falls Mitigation Project duties included attending meetings, reviewing HEP reports and management plans and coordinating the Coeur d'Alene Tribe's mitigation activities with the Work Group. Professional training attended included GIS training on the use of Arcview, a demonstration on the use of pre-planted stabilization mats by Bitterroot Restoration, the Wetland Training Institute's Wetland Restoration and Construction course, and Applied Fluvial Geomorphology taught by Dave Rosgen.

#### Kootenai Tribe of Idaho

In FY2000, the KTOI remains an active member of the Work Group and attended all meetings. Tribal staff continues to advance the Tribal mitigation program and promote wildlife habitat enhancement and restoration. In 2000, the KTOI participated in baseline HEP habitat surveys, provided assistance with habitat enhancement activities, and prepared annual project funding proposals. The Tribe also participated in the Boundary Creek WMA management plan revisions and assisted with the proposed Thorman WMA enhancement activities and design recommendations. Historic wetland GIS layers, aerial photos and other watershed references and information were added to Tribal databases. These databases assist in mitigation, enhancement and restoration efforts in the northern boundaries of the Albeni Falls Mitigation Area, Kootenai Subbasin and the Columbia River basin.

#### U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

The Corps provided the meeting room attended all Work Group meetings in 2000 and participated in several HEP. The Corps also provided mapping assistance to the IDFG.

### **Future Activities**

The Work Group anticipates increasing momentum for all implementation activities in the coming year. The IDFG and Kalispel Tribe will focus on land management and monitoring and evaluation activities in fiscal year 2001. The

KTOI and CDAT are expected to protect wetland habitat near their respective reservations in Idaho. The KTOI and the CDAT have already identified willing sellers, and they anticipate furthering landowner relationships so that property acquisitions will occur within the next year.

Table 1. Total Work Group acquisitions.

NAME	LOCATION	YEAR	MEMBER	ACRES	HEP	HUs	HUs/ACRE
Flying Goose I	Usk	1992	KT	436.00	Yes	526.80	1.21
Flying Goose II	Usk	1997	KT	164.00	Yes	225.00	1.38
Henderson Ranch	Clark Fork	1997	IDFG	240.00	Yes	373.27	1.55
Carter's Island	Clark Fork Delta	1997	IDFG	95.90	Yes	311.82	3.04
Denton Slough	Hope	1997	IDFG	16.76	Yes	41.44	2.92
Ginter	Lower Pack River	1998	IDFG	109.95	Yes	187.02	1.70
Hubbard	Boundary Creek	1999	IDFG	1,405.00	Yes	1329.16	0.95
Hunter Ranch	Lower Pack River	1999	IDFG	216.00	No	315.00	1.45
McMahon	Lower Pack River	1999	IDFG	30.00	No	45.00	1.50
Eich	Cocolalla Lake	1999	IDFG	98.00	No	100.00	1.02
Albeni Cove	Albeni Cove	1999	IDFG	70.00	No	70.00	1.00
Fletcher	Westmond Lake	1999	IDFG	65.00	No	70.00	1.06
Nacarotto	Priest River	2000	KT	63.00	No	94.5	1.50
Sivert	Cusick	2000	KT	437.00	No	358.34	0.82
Doramus	Cusick	2000	KT	303.00	No	183.16	0.60
Schiebel	Cusick	2001	KT	450.00	No	450.00	1.00
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>4,189.61</b>		<b>4,758.51</b>	<b>1.14</b>